



King County Mental Health Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division 2002 Briefing Paper

QUALITY REVIEW TEAM

BACKGROUND:

As part of the federal Medicaid waiver that started managed care for Medicaid mental health services, Regional Support Networks (RSNs) were required to develop Quality Review Teams (QRTs). The purpose of the QRT was to provide an independent assessment of system functioning and quality of care from the perspective of consumers of care. Each RSN could develop its QRT according to regional needs, with the caveat that the teams must consist of current or former consumers of mental health services or their family members.

The King County RSN elected to hire a QRT, compared with other RSNs that have chosen to use volunteers. We currently have a two person QRT, and the relationship with the QRT is positive. Unfortunately, some RSNs have contentious relationships with their QRTs with the result that lobbying to have the QRTs centralized through a state agency has ensued. In the 2002 legislative session, the legislature directed the state Department of Social and Health Services to study the impact of centralizing both regional Ombuds and QRT services.

ISSUES/CHALLENGES:

The challenge is to keep our Quality Review Team local—that is, attached to the RSN and not subsumed into a statewide team. Having a local team means that all efforts are directed toward understanding specifically what issues and concerns are faced by persons receiving publicly funded mental health services in this county. Because the team members have workspace in the Division, it also means close communication between the QRT and the RSN administration. A statewide team would not be as interested in or knowledgeable about the local system of care, and direct communication would be more challenging.

DATA:

Since 1995, the QRT has conducted three countywide client satisfaction surveys, a survey about clients' use and knowledge of crisis services, a survey about clients' perceptions of their case managers, and numerous client forums throughout the county. Each of these processes has direct impacts on local planning.

RECOMMENDATION/LEGISLATIVE ACTION:

MHCADSD is committed to keeping the Quality Review Team as a vital component of the RSN.